



**Bureau of Justice Assistance**

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## **EXECUTIVE SESSION ON STATE COURTS IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

Over the course of the last few decades, the role of courts at all levels of jurisdiction has increased immensely. Courts are no longer expected just to try and rule on cases, but rather have been called on to support strategic planning activities, raise awareness, develop their own continuity of operations plans to operate under emergency situations, and rethink the way they process and manage caseloads—all while dealing with ever-increasing caseloads.

BJA has partnered with the State Justice Institute, the National Center for State Courts, and Harvard's Kennedy School of Government to deliver a forum for judges entitled the *Executive Session on State Courts in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. This project brings together a group of prescient state court justices, academics, researchers and other justice professionals to think creatively about the challenges and opportunities facing state courts and the role of the judiciary in the United States.

Thinking expansively about the role of state judiciaries as instruments of democratic governance, the Executive Session will seek to both develop and answer the questions that state courts will face in the foreseeable future. Specifically, the Session will attempt to clarify what role judges and other leaders of state courts should play in defining and establishing the role of the courts they lead.

The Session will produce documents and publications that detail dialogue and recommendations discussed during each of six biannual meetings over the course of the next three years. These publications will serve to support widespread implementation of the group's recommendations.

For more information, contact Danica Szarvas-Kidd, BJA Policy Advisor for Adjudication, at [Danica.Szarvas-Kidd@usdoj.gov](mailto:Danica.Szarvas-Kidd@usdoj.gov).